



Kay Gilliland, Miriam Leiva and Iris Carl Awardee, Diane Kinch

Kay announcing Diane as winner of
TODOS Iris Carl Leadership and Equity Award

Our honoree is driven in her quest to ensure every child access to excellent mathematics learning. She fights tirelessly for the needs of English language learners, students with disabilities and all students.

She fearlessly confronts adult beliefs, behaviors and priorities that must be set aside if equity and excellence in mathematics education is to be achieved.

Our awardee was born right here in Philadelphia and grew up only a few miles from where we are at NCSM right now.

She went to Catholic schools through high school and there was one day she remembers vividly. She was in 10th grade and totally bored. The day dragged on forever. At the end of that day she realized her mistake and decided it was her choice and from that day on she would choose never be bored in school again. So she worked very hard at learning as much as possible and graduated high school in a class of 800 girls, only 40 of whom went on to college.

The inequity of this small number helped form her life-long commitment to fairness, to bringing a full range of opportunities to every child.

She majored in mathematics at Drexel University, which is just up Chestnut Street from where she lived. This was the 1960s, the war in Viet Nam was on; she knew she wanted to join the Peace Corps when she graduated but was not sure they would take her because she had not learned how to make bricks. She thought she had to build her own house and houses are made from bricks. She applied anyway and was accepted.

After 8 glorious weeks student teaching on St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, she flew to Liberia when she taught for three years at St. Patrick's High School in Monrovia. There were 45 boys in each class and they were the most motivated students she has ever had. She said, "They knew the value of an education. They

saw it in the streets every day.” One of her students from those days is now a professor at the University of Liberia and others are scattered all over the country. After Peace Corps she went to graduate school at Harvard and then to Montana to work on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation at Busby. She told me she “learned what it is like to live in a very cold climate, what it is like to live on a reservation, and what it is like to cry for your people.” She learned to be humble.

Next she taught middle school in Nicaragua and then at Belmont High School in Massachusetts for five years.

She married in 1981 and moved to California, working in Pomona for the next 30 years, 20 years as a teacher at Ganesha High School.

In April of 1987 she had her second realization that boredom would not do. She was standing in front of an Algebra II class when she said to herself, “I could do this in my sleep.” Everything changed in the way she taught. She was not going to be bored or bore anyone else if she could help it. In 1996 her students surprised her by writing essays about her and sending them to the Jaime Escalante Teacher of the Year competition. Because of her students she won it that year.

Our honoree has spent over ten years now working with teachers outside of the classroom. As a mathematics specialist in the Pomona Unified School District, she led secondary teachers in improving practice to meet the needs of English learners. Our honoree’s philosophy of “no excuses” and peer accountability translated into to a culture of openness and shared ownership across schools and grade levels. Long before it was required she had teachers and administrators analyze student mathematics learning data by grade level and course, by language proficiency, by teacher, and by school. She directly and fearlessly addressed the belief systems and practices that contributed to gains, and those that led to stagnation, and declines. Our honoree has persistently and actively sought out teachers of color for leadership roles, and nurtured Latino and African-American mathematics teachers as they have become lead teachers, coaches, and administrators. She was instrumental in expanding the San Gabriel Valley Mathematics Council and in articulating the needs of under-served Latino students in the east San Gabriel Valley. In her many roles in the California Mathematics Council (CMC), including conference committee member, President and now as Past President of CMC-South, she has set the standard for CMC to provide leadership opportunities for established and emerging teachers leaders of color, encouraging them to become featured speakers at the CMC-South annual conference in Palm Spring.

Under her leadership, CMC-South created an Equity Committee in the region, serving the mathematics teachers of more than 2.3 million mathematics students in eight counties. She has introduced thousands of teachers and administrators to the California version of the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics (CaCCSS-M). Her dedication to advancing the mathematics power and proficiency of Hispanic/Latino students and all English learners, including standard English learners, has permeated each presentation.

In retirement our honoree continues her work. She read speaker proposals for NCSM. She just finished bringing 8 groups of teachers to 24 different classrooms to watch students solve a problem from Fostering Algebraic Thinking for English Learners.

She has been an active member of TODOS from its launch, and believes deeply that as a professional organization we can expand our horizons to engage the next generation of teachers in leadership, and that is the way we will serve our children best.

For her tireless enthusiasm in fostering the very best of mathematics teaching and learning we present TODOS' highest and most prestigious award, the Iris Carl Leadership and Equity Award to Diane Kinch.